is no doubt true that the retention of Fort Sumter by the United States Government indicated the unwillingness of that Government to admit the claim of South Carolina to be considered an independent nation. But it was not an act of war. Merely to protract for a time, even for a considerable time, a condition of things once satisfactory to both parties, certainly cannot be considered an act of war. Even the refusal of the United States Government to comply with the demand for the surrender of the fort, while it showed, undoubtedly, that the Government was not willing at that time to acknowledge the independence of the State, was still consistent with the preservation of peace. It is true that the attempts at negotiation which had been tried by South Carolina and by the Confederate Government had been so far unsuccessful. They could, however, be tried again; or they could be abandoned, and war could be tried. This last was what the Confederate authorities decided to do; it is useless for Southern writers to attempt to evade the responsibility for beginning the civil war. The effort to supply provisions to the garrison furnishes no justification for the attack on the fort. The effort to put a thousand men, or guns and ammunition, into the fort, might

have furnished such a justification, for it would have directly increased the military power of the work. But to attempt to send provisions to that small garrison was no act of war; it was simply a measure necessary for the continuance of the existing state of things until it should be terminated either by negotiation or by violence. It was an act of war there-